



This is not the latest release
[View the latest release](#)

Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period September 2021

Released 2/12/2021

On this page

[Key statistics](#)

[Overview](#)

[Long-term trends](#)

[Industry](#)

[States and territories](#)

[Cause of dispute](#)

[Working days lost](#)

[Reason work resumed](#)

[Data downloads](#)

[Upcoming changes](#)

[Methodology](#)

Key statistics

In the September quarter 2021:

- 50 disputes occurred.
- 13,300 employees were involved and 18,500 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 6 industries and in 7 states and territories.

During the year ended September 2021, there were 123 disputes and a total of 64,600 working days lost.

	Quarter		Year ended	
	June 2021	September 2021	September 2020	September 2021
Number of disputes				
Commenced in period (no.)	30	39	78	118
Total (no.)	36	50	82	123
Employees involved				
Newly involved ('000)	6.0	11.7	16.3	22.2
Total ('000)	6.4	13.3	16.9	22.6
Working days lost ('000)	10.4	18.5	29.5	64.6

Overview

In the September quarter 2021, there were:

- 50 disputes, 14 more than from the previous quarter.
- 13,300 employees involved, an increase from 6,400 in the previous quarter.
- 18,500 working days lost, an increase from 10,400 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 123 disputes occurred, 41 more than in the previous year.
- 64,600 working days were lost, 119% more than the previous year.

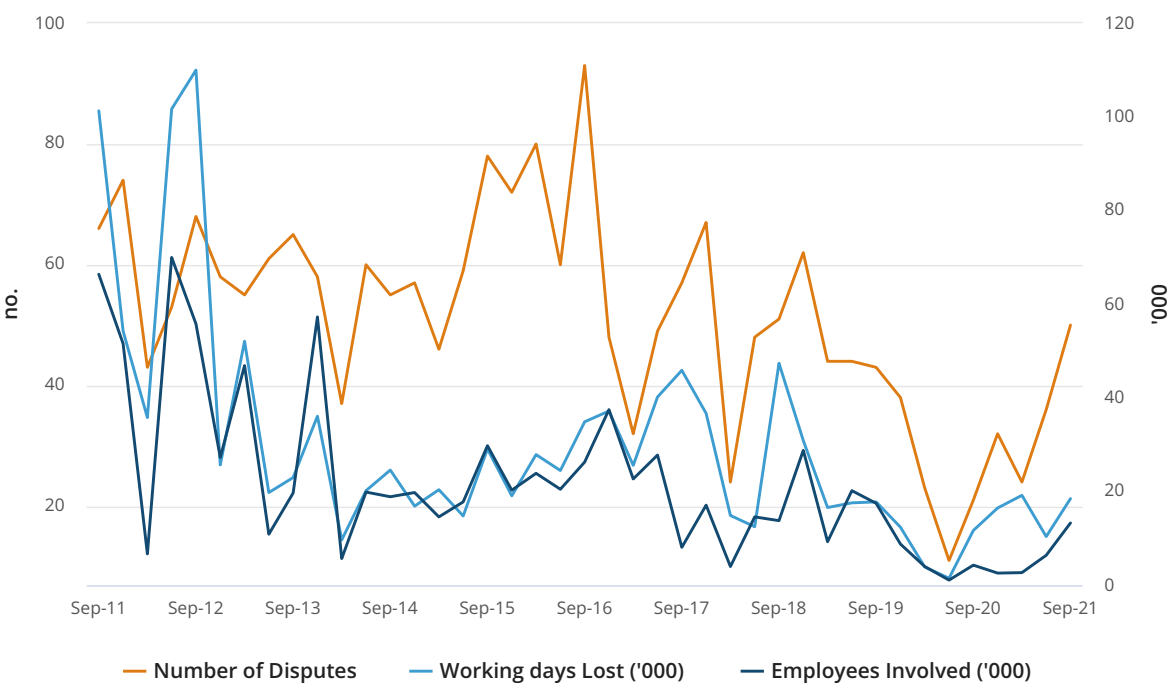
1 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

	Number of disputes		Employees involved		
	Commenced in period	Total	Newly involved	Total	Working days lost
	no.	no.	'000	'000	'000
September Quarter 2019	35	43	16.8	17.5	17.8
December Quarter 2019	34	38	8.3	8.8	12.4
March Quarter 2020	17	23	2.9	4.0	3.9
June Quarter 2020	8	11	0.9	1.1	1.5
September Quarter 2020	19	21	4.2	4.3	11.7
December Quarter 2020	27	32	2.2	2.6	16.5
March Quarter 2021	22	24	2.3	2.7	19.2
June Quarter 2021	30	36	6.0	6.4	10.4
September Quarter 2021	39	50	11.7	13.3	18.5

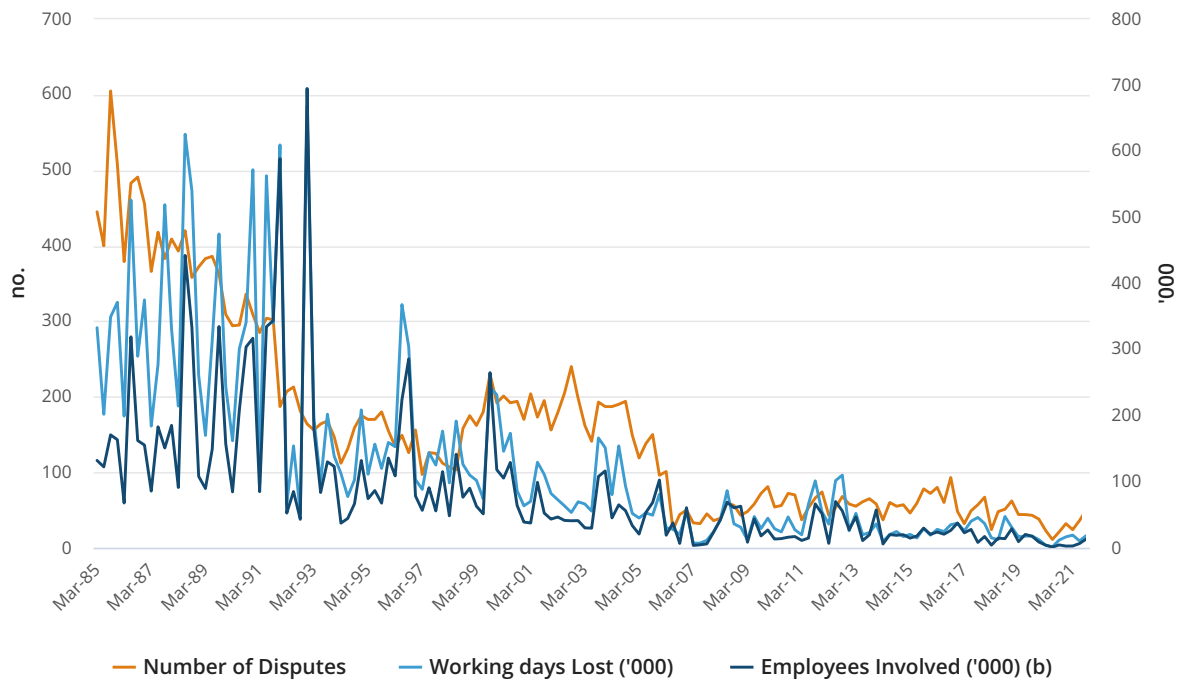
Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



Industry

In the September quarter, disputes occurred in six industries. Nearly five in ten (47%) working days lost were in the Transport, postal and warehousing industry.

2 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

	June Quarter 2021		September Quarter 2021	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
Mining				
Coal mining	0.7	15.2	-	-
Other mining	-	-	-	-
Manufacturing				
Metal product etc (a)	1.0	3.1	1.8	5.1
Other manufacturing	1.9	3.4	1.3	2.5
Construction	r2.2	r2.4	3.3	3.8
Transport, postal and warehousing	r1.3	r2.3	8.7	15.8
Education and training; Health care and social assistance	0.2	0.1	0.1	-
Other industries (a)	3.2	0.5	3.2	0.5
All industries	10.4	0.9	18.5	1.6

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

a. See [Glossary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary) - Industry - for details of industries included.

r revised

States and territories

Disputes occurred in seven states and territories in the September quarter, with one in four (25%) working days lost occurring in Western Australia.

3 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories

	June Quarter 2021		September Quarter 2021	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
NSW	2.5	0.7	4.0	1.1
Vic.	1.2	0.4	3.1	1.0
Qld	1.7	0.7	4.0	1.7
SA	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.5
WA	4.0	3.1	4.7	3.6
Tas.	-	-	1.4	6.0
NT	-	-	0.1	0.4
ACT	-	-	-	-
Australia	10.4	0.9	18.5	1.6

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 88% of disputes (22 of 25) which ended in the June quarter 2021.

4 Cause of disputes which ended during the quarter

	March Quarter 2021			June Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related						
Remuneration	2	np	np	8	0.4	1.8
Employment conditions (EB)	7	0.7	24.9	13	1.8	8.1
Other EB related	-	-	-	1	-	0.1
Non-EB related						
Remuneration	1	np	np	-	-	-
Employment conditions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health and safety	4	1.1	1.4	2	0.6	0.3
Job security	1	np	np	-	-	-
Managerial policy	2	0.2	0.1	-	-	-
Union issues	1	np	np	-	-	-
Other Non EB related	-	-	-	1	1.0	0.8
Total	18	2.3	26.8	25	3.8	11.2

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 25 disputes which ended in the June quarter, 17 lasted for 2 days or less.

5 Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

		March Quarter 2021			June Quarter 2021		
		Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000		no.	'000	'000
Up to and including 1 day	7	np	np		13	2.4	1.7
Over 1 day and up to including 2 days	6	0.8	1.4		4	0.2	0.3
Over 2 and less than 5 days	2	np	np		3	0.8	2.7
5 and less than 10 days	2	0.1	0.8		2	0.4	3.0
10 days and over	1	0.4	23.8		3	0.2	3.5
Total	18	2.3	26.8		25	3.8	11.2

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

Negotiation without intervention of a third party and Pre-determined return to work each accounted for 88% of disputes (22 of 25) which ended in the June quarter 2021.

6 Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

	March Quarter 2021			June Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Negotiation without intervention of a third party	6	1	24.4	6	0.4	3.1
State legislation -	-	-	-	1	np	np
Federal legislation	4	0.4	0.3	-	-	-
Pre-determined return to work	6	0.3	1.1	16	3.2	6.6
Resumption without negotiation	1	-	-	1	np	np
Mediation	1	0.5	1.1	1	0.1	1.4
Other reasons	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	18	2.3	26.8	25	3.8	11.2

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Data downloads

In line with updating to more recent technology formats, ABS will be progressively transitioning to Excel files in .XLSX format from 3 December 2021. This means the time series spreadsheets in Industrial Disputes, Australia, will be upgraded from the current .XLS to now be released in .XLSX. While this change will improve usability, it may also require changes to automated macros or similar programs that users may have in place that call on the current file extension format.

This change will take effect from the December quarter 2021 Industrial Disputes, Australia, to be released in March 2022. The file format for previously released data will not change.

Revisions

Revisions have been made to the June quarter 2021 data by industry, including the number of working days lost and working days lost per thousand employees in the Construction and Transport, postal and warehousing industries. These revisions are reflected in Table 2 and

the associated time series spreadsheets.

Time Series Spreadsheets

⬇ Download all (438.52 KB)

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

⬇ [Download XLS](#)
[86.5 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, industry

⬇ [Download XLS](#)
[107.5 KB]

Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

⬇ [Download XLS](#)
[105.5 KB]

Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, states and territories

⬇ [Download XLS](#)
[154.5 KB]

Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

⬇ [Download XLS](#)
[144 KB]

Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

⬇ [Download XLS](#)
[358.5 KB]

Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

⬇ [Download XLS](#)
[154.5 KB]

Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

⬇ [Download XLS](#)
[272 KB]

Upcoming changes

Thematic grouping and navigation for labour statistics on the ABS website

Labour statistics have traditionally been organised into two thematic groupings on the ABS website: 'Employment and unemployment'; and 'Earnings and work hours'. The ABS is planning to update these themes to better reflect the current range of available labour statistics, better align key labour market concepts with website themes and navigation, and improve discoverability. The planned new themes are:

- Employment and unemployment
- Jobs
- Earnings and working conditions
- Labour accounts

These new thematic groupings and navigation (and the statistical releases which will appear under each theme) can be viewed on our Beta website, at beta.abs.gov.au.

The Industrial Disputes publication will be included within the 'Earnings and working conditions' grouping.

The key changes include:

- addition of a 'Jobs' theme - to reflect the increasing range of jobs-related data ABS is releasing - including Weekly payroll jobs and wages and Jobs in Australia (currently in 'Earnings and work hours'), in addition to the longstanding statistics on Job vacancies and Job mobility (currently in 'Employment and unemployment').
- addition of a 'Labour accounts' theme - for cross-cutting quarterly and annual labour account data on jobs, people, hours and payments (currently in 'Employment and unemployment').
- renaming the 'Earnings and work hours' theme to 'Earnings and working conditions' - to provide a clearer pathway the large range of information available on working conditions beyond wages (work arrangements, flexibility, workplace relations, etc) and reflect that key hours data are available from the 'Employment and unemployment' theme (from the monthly Labour Force Survey) and the Labour account.

The changes are expected to be implemented in the first half of 2022. While implementation of these changes will result in a change to the placement of some statistical releases, and their respective URL's, there will be automatic redirects put in place. These redirects will ensure that existing URL's and bookmarks will continue to work.

If you have any feedback or questions on this new approach, please email us at labour.statistics@abs.gov.au.

Inquiries

For inquiries about these and related statistics, contact the Customer Assistance Service via the ABS website Contact Us page. The ABS Privacy Policy outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6321.0.55.001.

Methodology

[Industrial Disputes, Australia methodology, September 2021](#)